

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5840

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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TAGS: PFOR XF IS EG US

SUBJ: ISRAELI PRESS ON NEGOTIATIONS

1. MARCH 5 JERUSALEM POST CARRIES WASHINGTON DATELINED BLITZER STORY " SYRIA IS FLY IN OINTMENT--KISSINGER." CITING CONGRESSMEN PRESENT AT BREAKFAST MEETING WITH SECRETARY ON MARCH 4, BLITZER SAYS SECRETARY EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT SYRIA ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE HIS NEXT ROUND OF SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY, AND SAID SYRIA WAS LEADING DRIVE IN ARAB WOULD AGAINST ANOTHER AGREEMENT. " CONGRESSMEN" TOLD JP THAT SECRETARY SOUNDED LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN IN PAST, AND ALLEGED THAT HE SAID PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL AGREEMENT "WOULD BE 50-50" WITHOUT SYRIA'S ATTEMPTS TO SABOTAGE IT. MOST OTHER PAPERS ALSO CARRY THIS STORY.

2. HAARETZ FRONTPAGES STORY BY MARGALIT: " DR. KISSINGER, IS EQUIPPED WITH A PARTIAL AMERICAN PLAN WORKED OUT AT WHITE HOUSE. THOUGH VARIOUS CONTINGENCIES ARE BEING TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION, AMERICAN ASSUMPTION IS THAT ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO WITHDRAW FROM GAZA AND ABU UNCLASSIFIED

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RODEIS TO A DEPTH STILL TO BE NEGOTIATED, WHILE SADAT HAS

GIVEN ENCOURAGING HINTS ABOUT MAKING THINGS EASIER FOR ISRAEL IN BOYCOTT SPHERE (INCLUDING CANAL ARRANGEMENTS) AND, ACCORDING TO AMERICAN SOURCES, WHOSE READINESS TO EXPEDITE DRAFTING OF PUBLIC FORMULAS WHICH COULD 'DISARM ISRAELI SUSPICIONS'. ONE POSSIBILITY IS THAT EGYPT WOULD MODERATE TONE OF ITS PUBLIC UTTERANCES; AN INDICATION OF SERIOUS INTENTION TO PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT IS ALSO SEEN IN CAIRO-PLO QUARREL. KISSINGER WHILE EXPLAINING TO EGYPTIANS THAT SOME AGREEMENT WILL HAVE TO BE SIGNED WITH ISRAEL, CLAIMS THAT WHAT EGYPTIANS WILL PROMISE US IS NO LESS IMPORTANT. ISRAEL IS BEING PROMISED THAT US WILL NOT COMMIT ITSELF TO SUPPORT ANY EGYPTIAN DEMAND BEFORE THE START OF NEGOTIATIONS. BRUNT OF AMERICAN EFFORT THESE LAST DAYS HAS BEEN DIRECTED TOWARDS SAUDI ARABIA, IN VIEW OF SADAT'S COMPLAINT THAT FEISAL SEEMS TO THROW HIS SUPPORT BEHIND SYRIAN GENEVA DEMAND RATHER THAN STAGE-BY-STAGE POLICY."

3. SEGEV STORY IN MAARIV SAYS: " EGYPT'S TERMS HAVE HARDENED AGAIN: DEMAND FOR OPENING THE CANAL FOR INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING IS NOW THAT ISRAEL SHALL WITHDRAW FROM ABU RODEIS AS WELL AS FROM PASSES. FEISAL, DIPLOMATIC SOURCES IN WASHINGTON SAY, HAS TOLD SYRIANS THAT HE DOES NOT OBJECT TO A PARTIAL SETTLEMENT IN SINAI, BUT US DOES NOT YET KNOW WHETHER HE WILL PRESS FOR A SIMILAR SETTLEMENT ON GOLAN HEIGHTS. IF THAT IS HIS POSITION, US OFFICIALS BELIEVE, ASAD WILL FEEL ENCOURAGED TO DEMAND A FURTHER WITHDRAWAL ON HEIGHTS, AND CHANCES OF ACHIEVING FURTHER AGREEMENT WILL BE NIL. US OFFICIALS FEEL AS GOOD AS CERTAIN THAT EGYPT'S FIRST OFFER WILL BE MINIMAL AND UNACCEPTABLE TO ISRAEL, BUT ADD THAT KISSINGER WILL TRY TO BRIDGE GAP IN A SHUTTLE OPERATION. HE EXPECTS TO BE BACK IN WASHINGTON ON MARCH 26, BUT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO EXTEND HIS STAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

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